

REVIEW.

Saturday, March 28. 1713.

THE Fury of the Times being exerted most at this time by the *Pen and Ink*, it is not to be wonder'd at, that part of that *Salt and* *fire* which People spit at one another, comes up to what we call *Lampoon*, *Pasquinade*, *Ballad* and *Satyr*: In all Reigns, and, for ought I know, in all Ages has more or less been so.

But I cannot but make one *Observation* as I go, (viz.) That the *Lampoons* of this Age differ very much from those that we have seen in former Times; and tho', *at the same time*, we pretend much to have degree of *Polite Wit* beyond those Days; yet nothing of that keenness of *Satyr*, the happy turns and brightnes of *Fancy* appears in the *Lampoons* of this Age, that were seen in *Andr. Marvel*, *Sir John Denham*, *Rochester*, *Buckingham*, *Buckhurst*, *Sidley*, and *Others*, *the Wits of that Day*; nay, give *Sing-Song Urfeys* his due, even his *Ballads out did us* exceedingly: What wretched Stuff have we seen in our *publick Prints* on both sides, one as well as t'other, which ass for *Satyr*!

Not that the *Gall* runs lower at all, *for* never two *Parties* contended with so much *Animosity*; but the *newb Malice* is mingled with so much *less Wit*, that I think nothing is so *Silly* and *Surfeiting* as those wth of them that I have seen, take them which way you will, whether on one side against the Duke of *Carlborongh*, or on the other against my *Lord* *reasurer* or the *Queen*, there's no great odds in 'em.

I remember in the Days of King *Charles the II.* one of the bitterest *Invectives* against him, when put into *Lampoons*, were cover'd with such a *bewitching Fancy*, and such a *flood of Wit*, that the King himself would laugh at them, and be pleased with them: And who can help, *tho' never so severely* *scolded*, being pleas'd with the *Wit* of the incomparable *Hudibras*?

The *Dialogues* between the two *Horses* so pleas'd the King, that tho' it was the bitterest *Satyr*, upon *him and his Father*, that ever was made, the King would often repeat them with a great deal of *Pleasure*, and particularly these that follow.

But I should ha' told you before the Jades parted,
Both gallop'd to White-Hall, and there bumbly fa...ed;
Which Monarchy's downfall portended much more,
Than all that the Beasts had been saying before:
*For if the Delphick, and Sybil, *Oracular Speeches*,*
As Learned Men say, come forth from their Breeches:
Why might not our Horses, since Words are but Wind,
Have the Spirit of Prophecy likewise behind?

Let us see any thing so sprightly now from the *Wits* of this Age, and something may be said for them: A *Pasquinade* ought to be pointing like a *Dart*, that should wound Mortally at every cast; the *Sting* should be so very sharp, that it should kill even all the *Resentment* of the Persons *Satyriz'd*: so that the Person pointed at should be *asham'd* to be *Angry*; or if he was, he should do as the generous Duke of *Buckingham* did to *Mr. Dryden*, for his *Satyr* upon him in his *Abalom and Achitophel* — when he first *Can'd* him, and then gave him a *Purse of Gold*: *That's for your ill Language*, Sir, said the Duke, when he *Can'd* him: And then giving him the *Gold*, *here Sir*, said his *Grace*, *and that's for your Wit*. When such *Satyr*s as these appear, I can not think any *Government*, or *Minister of State*, or *General* in this Age, would resent them.

But when *Dirt* throws *Dirt*, when great *Men* are made the *Scorn* and *Contempt* of *Parties*, and in *ribaldry* that has nothing but *Rage* in it; no *Fancy*, no *Brightness*; there's nothing to keep the *stench* out of our *Noses*; a *Man* cannot say it is done *clean*; and therefore I have long wonder'd to see how our *People* on both sides *bug*, and *hand about* such *weak* and *empty Pieces*, as their *Fathers* would not have *vouchsafed* to look at: But it is an *Evidence* of the *Ascendant Rage* has got over our *Senses*, which has *debauch'd* the *taste of Wit*: Indeed our *Party Feuds* have something so *melancholy* in them, they leave no room for the *Nation's Genius* to *smile*; to be *Merry* with them, is like laughing at a *Funeral*, or making a *Ballad* upon a *Murther*. And this I take to be the *Reason*, for when the *Passions* swell beyond their *ordinary*, the *Springs* are wound up too high

high to Chime, there's no Musick in their Strife at all.

Let no Man mistake me now, and suggest that I am pointing at the Accident that happen'd this Week, in taking up some honest People for handing about a Paper reflecting on the Queen; I had no view that way at all — I am upon the Papers themselves, not the handing them about — I pity the Misfortune of the People, tho' I am very sorry for the sake of others, *more than of the Sufferers*, that this happen'd in that Place; however, I never prompt Justice upon any one, I scorn it, and therefore shall say nothing to it, only this in general, We are caution'd in Scripture not to suffer *as evil doers*; and I think all wise Men should take care not to suffer *as Fools*.

As to handing Treasonable Papers about in Coffee Houses, *every body knows* it was the Original of the very thing call'd a Coffee-House, and that it is the very Profession of a Coffee-Man to do so, and it seems hard to punish any of them for it: And this was the Reason why in King Charles's time there was once a Proclamation in the Pres to put down all the Coffee-Houses in London; (*Note, by the way, there was not so many as there are now*) because they were Broachers of Treason; upon which Dr. Wild made his famous Verses, which ended thus.

*Then Charles thine Edicts against Coffee recall,
There's ten times more Treason in Brandy and Ale.*

It being then so natural, nay, so essential to our Coffee-House-Keepers, to gratify their Customers with a Secret out of the Bar, a bit of Treason by the by; and that it was so in the beginning, *is now, and always will be so*; I cannot but hope it shall plead in the favour of the good People now in trouble; and that is the best I can say for it; only by way of Caution to somebody else, *were Hawk is the Word, have a care T—B—, I—M—, R—C—, M—B—, G—N—*, and forty more — *Fælix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*; and so much for the Coffee-Houses.

But why must we argue now from the Paper to the Persons? I see some very fond to have it be said, That the Crime of this Matter lies in the Persons who were to read this Paper at the Coffee House; but I can by no means allow that Reflection to be

just, unless it was peculiar to that Coffee-House more than another, or that none but such People came there — But this will be always said, There never was a Child, but if it had a Mother it had a Nurse; When a Malicious thing it written it will be read, and itching Ears are not the plague of this Age alone; the Crime is not in Reading but Writing; let the Author stand clear; he that Prints Treason had need have good Workmen, or no Workmen at all.

But this is not the meaning of my Observations I am upon the matter of these Papers, not the manner of dispersing them; and I do confess, as I say above, it is my Opinion, that the Satyrs of this part of our Age are so mean, in comparison of the last, that I believe the next will never think them worth Collecting, as the last were, into six Volumes of State Poems — And above all, I must needs say, I think I have not seen one yet that is worth an Author marching from Newgate to Aldgate for; if any Author thinks otherwise, he is very welcome to make the Experiment.

If the great Men, whether *in* or *out*, must be Banter'd and Satyriz'd, I would fain perswade our Poets to go about it like Poets; that is, like Men of Sense and Men-of Wit; and let it be done sharp, and clever, suitable to the Quality of the Persons and the Dignity of Satyr. I am perswaded, if it be Censur'd then, and you come to any trouble for it, the Wit of it will help you out a little, at least you will obtain some Compassion: *Hang him, it is a witty Rogue, it's pity he should be ruin'd*, said King Charles the II. of Harry Care, and would not let him be Prosecuted, when an Indictment was order'd against him, because what he said was clean and sharp; but no Man pities a Fool.

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